Accellion

Deploying Innovation – the Advantages of Virtualization for Secure File Transfer

REDUCING IT COSTS AND COMPLEXITY

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Executive Summary

In looking for ways to create operational efficiencies, IT departments are rapidly adopting a new computing architecture called "virtualization."

With virtualization, software applications share expensive computing resources including space, power and cooling to increase efficiency. Organizations use virtualization strategies to reduce the cost and complexity of their IT infrastructure and to increase business agility. Gartner analysts conservatively predict that 40 percent of new operating system [and application] deployments will be in a virtual environment by 2009.

This whitepaper addresses how to take advantage of virtualization benefits through a "virtual appliance." The virtual appliance described in this whitepaper is the Accellion secure file transfer virtual appliance. Based on Accellion's award-winning enterprise file transfer system, currently deployed in over 20 countries, the Accellion virtual appliance enables enterprises to securely transfer large files consisting of business information and corporate assets between internal and external users while taking advantage of virtualization.

The virtual appliance – taking advantage of virtualization

Virtualization works to separate software from the underlying hardware. This enables a single computer server to run multiple operating systems and applications concurrently, delivering significant improvements in efficiency, availability, flexibility and manageability. In essence, virtualization lets you transform hardware into software. VMware is a major provider of software that can transform or "virtualize" the hardware resources of a computer server, creating a fully functional virtual machine that can run various operating systems and applications.

The "virtual appliance" application design method creates pre-built, pre-configured, plug-and-play enterprise applications that run in a virtualized environment. The virtual appliance provides the easiest form factor for deploying a virtualized application. The turnkey virtual appliance enables software to be easily downloaded onto the host server, delivering application deployment in full production within hours, depending on the enterprise connection speed.

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The Accellion virtual appliance – secure file transfer for a virtual world

The leading secure large file transfer solution from Accellion is now available in a virtual configuration. The Accellion Secure File Transfer Virtual Appliance provides the same robust features and capabilities of the original award-winning Accellion hardware-based appliance, but with unparalleled ease of installation, deployment and management.

Streamlined form-factor

Deployed as a virtual appliance, the Accellion secure file transfer solution requires no additional hardware capital investment and minimal IT administration. Data center resources, energy and cooling needs, as well as space requirements, are also reduced, resulting in significantly lower operating costs. The Accellion Virtual Appliance consists of a software download with the accompanying benefits of deployment speed and simplified installation as well as reduced costs, configuration flexibility, and increased business agility.

For IT organizations with experience in deploying and using virtualized IT environments, the benefits of the Accellion Secure File Transfer Virtual Appliance will be immediately apparent. For IT organizations just beginning to deploy a virtualized environment, the Accellion file transfer solution is a perfect "starter" virtual application due to its simplicity and significant business process improvements. In both cases, there are numerous advantages to installing the Accellion secure file transfer system as a virtual appliance:

Simplified installation and deployment

The Accellion Virtual Appliance is delivered as a software download and can be installed within minutes, depending on the enterprise connection speed. The administrator that downloads the software should have basic knowledge of the VMware environment. Beyond that, no specialized skills are required. Since there is no need to spend or wait for hardware device delivery and set up, the time and cost savings are considerable. Once downloaded, the pre-configured and ready-to-run Accellion Virtual Appliance can be immediately tested and evaluated to verify it meets enterprise requirements. As soon as an evaluation is completed, the roll-out to internal as well as external users can begin without delay.

Flexibility

A major advantage of a virtualized IT infrastructure is that changes to applications can be made very quickly, including allocating resources specifically to critical points of need or to the entire system. Applications can be scaled easily to meet changing demands. For example, an initial pilot program of the Accellion file transfer solution can be deployed to give access to only one department. Once the pilot program proves successful more users can be easily added in minutes. In addition, Accellion's Virtual Appliance can be used in combination

"When we installed the Accellion solution to evaluate it, this product quickly became the benchmark for how a secure file transfer product should work. The virtual appliance is easy to deploy, and we had it running in just a few hours."

**Dallas LaRose,
Enterprise Systems Supervisor,
GSD&M Idea City**

with Accellion's hardware-based appliances for even greater flexibility if a company has various locations with virtual and traditional environments.

Reduced costs

A leading business driver for adopting a virtual infrastructure is to reduce operational costs. The Accellion Virtual Appliance can help in this process. Because the Accellion Virtual Appliance is a software download, there is no additional hardware capital expenditure. A reduced hardware footprint in the data center also saves real estate (space), power consumption and cooling expenses. Accellion secure file transfer solutions take minimal IT administration, which also reduces systems management overhead and time.

Improved performance and business agility

The Accellion virtual appliance is most often installed on a more powerful multi-processor server than the lower-end Accellion hardware-based appliance. With the Accellion Virtual Appliance even small deployments can run on very high end computer hardware. This can yield better performance for the entire file transfer process, and can also increase overall business productivity. The extreme flexibility in configuring and scaling a virtual appliance can increase business agility as it takes only minutes to provide file transfer capabilities to a large group of new users. For example, when a new customer or business unit is added, the capability to securely exchange large files can be deployed within minutes.

An overview of the Accellion Secure File Transfer Virtual Appliance

The Accellion Virtual Appliance runs on any standard x86 desktop or server using VMware virtualization products. For production deployments, VMware Server or VMware Infrastructure (VMware ESX 3.0 or higher) is required. Since VMware software runs on Microsoft Windows, Linux and Mac OS X, the Accellion virtual appliance can be used in practically any IT environment.

There are five models of the virtual appliance, each one designed to handle a range of users and workloads. The chart below shows the storage and memory requirements of each model, as well as the target workload range:

Virtual Appliance	AV100	AV250	AV500	AV1000	AV2000
Storage	63GB	125GB	250GB	500GB	1000GB
RAM	1GB	1GB	2GB	4GB	4GB
Capacity	80 GB	80 GB	147 GB	300 GB	1.2 TB

For each specific model Accellion Virtual Appliance, the software license allows access to a certain amount of virtual storage. The number of users supported by an appliance varies according to the average file size and how long the files are kept before deletion. Multiple hardware-based and/or virtual appliances can be networked together to meet the file transfer needs of very large or multi-site enterprises. RAM recommendations are guidelines based on best practices. The RAM allocated to the file transfer application can be increased to improve performance as needed. The host CPU can be configured per administrators' requirements.

Getting Started

Accellion offers a free evaluation of its virtual appliance-based secure file transfer solution. The Accellion Virtual Appliance is provided as a software download which the organization can install for an initial 30-day evaluation period. If the decision is made to complete the process a purchase order is then required.

Installing the Accellion Virtual Appliance software is an easy process. Once the organization's purchase order is approved, a secure link is delivered to the specified address to download the software directly to the designated server. The link provides access to the software image, the license file and all documentation.

Configuring the software is also efficient and easy. When a system administrator logs in for the first time a configuration wizard is enabled to complete the installation. This allows for easy set up of specific parameters, such as authentication and permission, as well as global network rules and settings for large file transfer policies.

Optionally, the Accellion software can be integrated with a Microsoft Active Directory system or LDAP directory system. This allows administrators to set up automatic authentication of internal users as well as policy control and permission-based access for users' rights and capabilities.

An added ease-of-use advantage is that the Accellion software allows direct integration with Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes client software. With these plug-in options, Accellion customers can access the file transfer utility from within their regular email application or use a web interface. Remote and external users can also use the web interface to access secure file transfer. Both direct email and web interfaces enable easy adoption with minimal training and support.

How one Accellion customer chose the virtual appliance for creative collaboration

The Accellion secure file transfer solution fits into any industry or business where there is a requirement to exchange large files promptly and securely.

One major industry that has benefited from the rapid deployment of the Accellion solution is Advertising/Marketing Services.

GSD&M Idea City

The creative firm GSD&M Idea City was founded in 1971 by six University of Texas graduates. Today the company is a 300 person, $500 million advertising agency known for creating value for its clients through bold ideas. The unique working environment of Idea City is designed to maximize creativity and stimulate the small working groups that generate big ideas. The agency works on the principle of Dynamic Collaboration, which is born out of the fundamental beliefs that "no one has the corner on the smarts" and "we're all better together."

In its on going collaboration with customers, media outlets and other groups, Idea City has a constant need to send and receive large files containing proprietary creative works. Employees often need to exchange large digital media such as video and audio which can't easily be sent via email. Typical file sizes are in the 200 MB to 500 MB range but it's not unusual for some files to reach the 6 GB to 8 GB mark. Finding an efficient and cost effective means to securely send these creative works was a business imperative for Idea City.

After performing an evaluation of secure file transfer solutions based on criteria including cost, ease of use, installation speed, solution reliability, maintenance and IT support, as well as security and compliance factors, the choice came down to the Accellion appliance and one other product. In a side by side comparison the Accellion product stood out for several reasons. Accellion met all the business requirements and selection criteria for easily transferring exceptionally large files within and outside of the company. Also, the virtual appliance form factor fit perfectly with Idea City's IT strategic direction, which includes server consolidation and application virtualization.

According to Dallas LaRose, Enterprise Systems Supervisor for Idea City, "Our data center was growing and we were running out of space. Our cooling and power requirements were getting out of hand. We made the strategic direction to run a virtual environment, and the Accellion Virtual Appliance was a perfect fit for our needs." After a successful initial deployment, the agency is rolling out access to all its employees as well as hundreds of external partners and clients.

"The Print Production Department uses our file transfer application on a daily basis to get files out to our vendors and make production and/or printing deadlines. We couldn't get along without it. We are extremely happy to see larger file sizes being able to transfer more quickly."

**Diane Patrick,
Senior VP and Director of Print Services, GSD&M Idea City**

The Accellion secure file transfer system is an enterprise-class solution that addresses the full range of business needs

Accellion's secure file transfer system is architected to address the critical functional and technical requirements for enterprise file exchange. With the introduction of the Accellion Virtual Appliance now organizations can take advantage not only of the benefits of Accellion but also the benefits of virtualization. The Accellion secure file transfer solution is configured to be easy to deploy, whether using the downloadable virtual appliance or the hardware appliance form factor. Both the hardware-based and the virtual appliances

deliver the same full range of benefits from the industry-leading secure file transfer solution, including the following:

Ease of installation, deployment and adoption

√   Minimal IT involvement - Virtual software download or easily installed hardware appliances

√   A familiar easy-to-use email interface, offered as a web interface or as an optional email plug-in for Microsoft Outlook or Lotus Notes.

√   End user control over the file transfer process, yet with IT policy control

√   Unlimited guest use so that files can be exchanged with colleagues outside the company

√   Large Files and folders up to 20GB in size sent securely.

√   Offloads large file attachments from e-mail

√   Automatic confirmation of receipt of the files sent to the sender as well as to system logs

√   Automatic resumption of upload or download without loss of data after a communication interruption

Security and compliance with business and government regulations

√   End to end file security via file encryption, transmission over secure channels, and recipient authentication

√   File management capabilities for tracking files and managing lifecycle (automatic deletion)

√   Directory services authentication using LDAP or Microsoft Active Directory

√   Auditable records of system use

√   Integration with enterprise storage infrastructure

Conclusion

Organizations of any size will benefit from dedicated secure file transfer to ensure that critical business files and information assets are sent and received securely and in a timely fashion. Now that virtualization is becoming the norm rather than the exception, it is wise to consider a solution that works well within a virtualized IT environment. Organizations now have a choice of deploying the Accellion secure file transfer solution as a software-only virtual appliance or alternatively as a traditional hardware-based appliance solution. With the introduction of the Accellion Virtual Appliance for secure large file transfer, Accellion is helping enterprises rapidly deploy and scale secure large file transfer solutions that take advantage of the virtual benefits of reduced costs for power, cooling, and space and increased business efficiency.

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About Accellion

Founded in 1999, Accellion, Inc. is the premier provider of on-demand secure file transfer solutions with an extensive customer base covering industries such as advertising/media production, legal, manufacturing, engineering, healthcare, consumer goods, higher education, and more.

Accellion provides an enterprise file transfer solution that is secure, economical and easy to use for both end users and IT management. Unlike email and FTP that can no longer meet the evolving security and business requirements, Accellion enables enterprises to eliminate FTP servers, create Sarbanes-Oxley compliant business processes, improve email infrastructure performance, and reduce IT management footprint requirements.

The Accellion secure file transfer solution allows internal and external users to send and receive files bi-directionally on the same platform without adding administrative overhead or infrastructure burden. Accellion offers an intuitive web interface with end-to-end file security and policy-based file lifecycle management. Accellion also supports plug-in integration with Outlook and Lotus Notes email clients. For multi-site enterprises, Accellion offers clustering for multi-site load balancing, intelligent replication and failover.

Accellion is a privately held company headquartered in Palo Alto, California with offices in North America, Asia and Europe.

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